Manitoba Education, Training and Youth

AHWEWAYWIN KISKAYNTUMWIM
(sharing / lending information / knowledge)

A Learning Resource Meeting

Thunderbird House

March 19th, 2002

Background

Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, Program Development and the Native Education Directorate sought an opportunity to enable sharing of resources amongst educators within the province.

It is believed that new and innovative ways of developing and using learning resources with, about, and for, Aboriginal peoples need to be 'showcased'. By showcasing these types of resources, it becomes possible to share information and knowledge and generate greater capacity.

A one-day of *ahwewaywin kiskayntumwim* was envisioned. Invitations were extended to a select group of school divisions, Metis and First Nations educational institutions, resources centres, and to departmental staff.

The following serves as a brief summary and highlights of the day.

Purpose of the Day

The purpose of the day was:

- To give schools, school divisions, and organizations an opportunity to share information about learning resources produced or under development
- To explore possibilities for collaboration on learning resources
- To foster and create partnerships.

Introduction

The day of *ahwewaywin kiskayntumwim* was hosted by Manitoba Education, and took place at the Thunderbird House, in Winnipeg, on March 19th, 2002.

Attendees included a wide range of educators from across the province. As part of the session, displays (gallery walk) were arranged, that were dedicated to the sharing of resources materials and ideas.

The day commenced with an opening prayer by Garry Robson and opening remarks by the directors of the respective hosting branches, namely, Program Development and the Native Education Directorate.

Garry Robson gave a *teaching on sharing*. He spoke of the approach to sharing from an Aboriginal perspective, which is applicable for all children, not just for Aboriginal children. He offered the reminder "that there was always someone who know a little more that you" and he implored people to ask the questions... "How do you say this? How do you talk about this?"

Garry also reminded participants that each child has to first believe in themselves, in the Creator and in others, which gives them faith and in turn, the gifts of knowledge, strength, truth, life, honour and respect.

He shared his belief that all of these gifts are within each of our children and that, as educators, we need to bring out these qualities, beliefs and virtues in each child. As educators it is our responsibility to find the best ways to accomplish this.

The teaching continued with perspectives on sharing of the generations, sharing of the gifts of the races (i.e. red race the gift of vision; yellow that of patience; black the gift of reason; and, white the gift of motion).

Garry emphasized that Aboriginal children learn through observation, and that we need to know and understand how important observation can be. He challenged the participants to look for the similarities of the races (example the braid, the drum) and wondered how much greater our overall understanding would be, if we were able to look at things from the perspective of all of our brothers and sisters.

What We Heard

The day was organized into a series of presentations, group discussions and plenary sessions, designed to address the following questions:

> *What learning resources have you got that are working?*
>
> *What are the gaps in obtaining successful learning resources for use in our classroom?*
>
> *How can we be working stronger together? Who is taking the lead to ensure resources are shared?*

Appendix A (attached) provides the transcription of the notes from all of the group recordings. In summary form, the highlights of each of the discussions are presented below.

Sharing our innovations, new ways of developing and using learning resources

Presentations were provided by guest speakers from:

- Winnipeg School Division No. 1
- St. Boniface School Division No. 4
- Rolling River School Division No. 39

With respect to the question "*What learning resources have you got that are working?, group discussions yielded the following:*

> There is a level of expertise, community resource people and Aboriginal educators, models and materials that are in use and effective. There needs to be greater sharing of information on these models, materials and their use, and a sharing of knowledge and expertise. Networking is needed across jurisdictions to generate greater capacity within the overall system.
>
> Further, the Aboriginal perspective needs to be built into the school system - an overall integration of Aboriginal perspective in terms of curriculum, materials, language, and parental / community involvement in education.

Gaps – Addressing the needs and using learning Collaborations / Partnerships

Guest presenters continued to share their innovations and new paths, including:

- Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre
- Lakeshore School Division
- Niji Mahkwa School
- School District of Mystery Lake
- Pemmican Publications Inc.
- Aboriginal Community Campus
- Seven Oaks School Division

With respect to the question "*What are the gaps in obtaining successful learning resources for use in our classroom?, group discussions provided the following responses:*

> Real materials, examples and artifacts that are useable and build knowledge in meaningful and positive ways – an education approach that is culturally sensitive, and that works in support of the education of Aboriginal students within clear and supported policy and financial frameworks.

With respect to the final set of questions "*How can we be working stronger together? Who is taking the lead to ensure resources are shared?, the following was noted:*

> The sharing of resources, contacts and knowledge – getting together and / or using technologies, community partnerships and other means to create centralized, shared resources and expertise.
>
> A provincially led initiative is needed to develop the means to share and communicate, using the support and wisdom of those with experience and commitment.

In Summary

The success of this day of sharing can be measured by the excitement in the room, where participants are anxious to continue their individual and collective discussions. This day marked the beginning of a way of sharing that Garry Robson spoke in the teaching. The day provided participants with opportunities to begin to open doors, and the beginning of finding new ways to help children believe in themselves, to have faith that others believe in them and their successes.

There appears to a clear and extensive understanding of what's needed, and what resources are missing. There are also strong and consistent suggestions as to what should be done, and what partnerships are needed. Where knowledge and consideration is weakest is in relation to how to get started, and who should be leading the way. Leadership is now needed, demonstrated by putting the suggestions of the day into action.

Garry Robson closed the formal part of the day with a prayer for all children and for all their teachers.

Respectfully submitted…

Miigwech. Ekosi. Marsee (Merci). Muhsi. Matna. Pidamayakiye. Thank you.

April 9th, 2002

Appendix A

Notes of Group Discussions

What learning resources have you got that are working?

The sharing of expertise in how to best support Aboriginal students, for example

- Students need to feel a true sense of belonging (eg. seeing themselves portrayed in storybooks)
- Aboriginal perspectives to be built into the existing curriculum (e.g. study on Aboriginal community; have bannock as part of the breakfast program)
- Daily integration of Aboriginal perspectives, rather than the one shot "beads, bannock and braids approach
- Include Aboriginal perspectives as a strategy that will be used when planning all units
- Use the knowledge of Elders and community people with staff and students in the schools
- Develop school initiated courses and share them
- Use multiple intelligences theory in the teach of languages
- Use the six ELA strands – emphasis on speaking, viewing, representing and listening in the teaching of languages
- Build technology into the teaching of language and other areas
- Encourage the involvement of parents (e.g. Red River College offers a continuing education course in languages)

Networking, joining forces and making things work

Identifying resource people and resource materials

Hearing and listening to ideas

Modelling best practices, resources and materials, proto types that work

Support of school divisions, helping students to be successful

Search for talent and resources people (e.g. ceramics, pow wow dancers, beading, elders, storytellers, tee pee builders, traditional feasts)

Record / photo / use the media, have students record and write about events, activities and help them identify with community resource people

Have the media report on what is being done

Aboriginal role modelling program (locally within Thompson area)

Use of Aboriginal books and Aboriginal perspectives within the school

In-service teachers to be sensitive (language and ideas)

De-colonization, education reform

Inclusive school (learning the language and learning from each others culture)

Decisions are made in relation to being student-centred

Networking of resources (CFS and police department)

Make education a place of empowerment for parents
Student involvement (e.g. high school multi cultural conference)

Student exchanges

Sets of books

Kits (e.g. books with lessons, artefacts with explanations)

Canadian content material

Helping teachers integrate

Classroom presentation

Sharing circles, with a focus specified by teacher or guidance counsellor

Resource centre

Communication – all partners in education working together

Annual METY meeting

On line information – monthly newsletter
Province – subscription
Division

Networking between divisions with a list of contact people

Community outreach within divisions, including, newsletter, home visits, classroom visits, teacher-oriented resource centre and evening parent group

Building resources including, collecting, conditional borrowing, and sharing ideas

Local people with experience, Elders and teachers and spiritual guides – a relationship between "old ones" and "young ones"

Language

Theatre (plays) and Books

Film

Actual artefacts of each Aboriginal group

Visitors

Exchange students

Extended family in community

New media technology to promote concepts

Traditional teachings

What are the gaps in obtaining successful learning resources for use in our classroom?

Syllabics and Roman Orthography

Manitoba language curricula

Funding priorities at the provincial and federal levels

Lack of material, including, Inuit artefacts, language and culture, Canadian and Manitoba content, print and non-print materials

Lack of parental language skills

A strategy to address lack of parental involvement

A decreasing number of Elders with traditional experiences

Integration of Aboriginal perspective in all curricula

Communication, exchange of information

Consistent guidelines and a policy endorsed provincially

Aboriginal perspective needs to be a part of all schools

Culturally sensitive teachers

Language

Sense of humour

Language materials and instructors

More Aboriginal resource people

How do you get books out to communities that don't have bookstores?

New media technologies (you can develop things that are wonderful, but are the school equipped to use the materials?)

Staffing is already an issue – what about culturally educated staff

Usability – be sure the resource is understandable and useable by adults and user-friendly for children (are they drawn to or attracted to it?)

Need someone to take charge

Jurisdictional concerns

Get around funding issues

A resource centre (provincial) that provides for Aboriginal education resources and satellites modelled after MFNERC

Annual sharing session

Contact list

Resource list with divisional sharing policy, price lists, copyrights, etc.

How can we be working stronger together?

Sharing our resource regularly (initiated by different organizations and self-networking)

Special website to seek lesson plans and chat

Dissolve jurisdictional boundaries and share materials freely (we serve the same kids)

Great a central resource library so everyone can access these regardless of who or where he or she is

Àboriginal consultant to advocate and implement for all school divisions, mandated by the province, to bring back and share information with all staff

Develop strong ommunity partnerships

Take action on these suggestions; Aboriginal educators are doing one or more jobs, we need more paid positions and more support as well as mandated teamwork

Develop a central ERC for all school divisions

Who is taking the lead to ensure resources are shared?

Project: provincially led to create Aboriginal materials (senior, middle school years)

MET can take the lead in developing partnerships

People who have a vested interest and are committed to helping all learners

Aboriginal circle of educators

AAA working group

April, 2002